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Congress; but, while the people were generally moved to indignation by moral principle, it was made at Washington so much of a party affair on both sides, as to prevent any decisive action. In the Senate, a bill for the punishment of duellists was passed, and the House appointed a committee of investigation, who made three independent reports, all agreeing in the main facts, and in their condemnation of the deed; but, amidst the selfish, unprincipled manœuvres of each party, nothing more was done than to publish the documents in the case, and leave them to produce their own effect on the nation.

WAR COMPARED WITH DUELLING.

I WAS glad to hear from every quarter a simultaneous burst of indignation against the late duel in Washington. All the persons concerned in it are stained with the guilt of deliberate, cold-blooded murder; and upon every one of them should be branded the mark of Cain in characters never to be effaced. It was a crying sin against God. It was a foul crime against the laws of every State in the Union. It is a disgrace to Congress, that can never be blotted from its records. It is an indelible stigma on the whole nation. It is a cruel, barbarous, brutal outrage upon humanity.

Glance at the fearful aggravations of the case. That the lawgivers of a Christian people should thus trample on the laws of God and their country; that a son of New England, where a duel is murder in law as well as fact, should so strangely disregard the principles of his fathers, and the opinions of the very community that sent him to the council chamber of the nation; that a husband and a father should prove so cruelly recreant to the wife of his bosom, and the children of their mutual love; that the accomplices should so coolly, so complacently publish their own share in this cold-blooded villany, and talk about having “done their *duty*!!” according to the code of honor regulated by *magnanimous* principles, and the laws of *humanity*;; that they should thus pour fresh insult upon a community so grossly outraged, upon the wife they had made a widow, and the little ones they had plunged into the sorrows of orphanage; that both Houses of Congress should then pass a vote, without a whisper of rebuke or dissent, to show the fallen duellist the honor of attending his funeral, and

wearing crape for thirty days ; that his colleagues should dare to pronounce his eulogy before the world, and speak of its having been *necessary* thus to defy the laws of God and man for the purpose of "avoiding disgrace to himself, to his family, and his constituents ;"—all this surely caps the climax of inconsistency, guilt and shame.

But mark the contrast. Had this fatal rencontre been called a battle instead of a duel ; had fifty thousand men, instead of two individuals, met upon a field of legalized human butchery ; had there fallen, not a solitary victim, in the arms of friends, but ten thousand of the enemy alone in all the fierce, unsolaced, unpitied agonies of the battle-field ; had there been, not a single widow and her three orphans to mourn a husband and a father, but ten thousand wives, and thirty thousand children, doomed at once to widowhood and orphanage ; what would have been said of such an accumulation of guilt and misery ? Would Congress have instantly paused to investigate its causes ? Would the press have teemed with denunciations ? Would the pulpit have rebuked it ? Would a thrill of horror have run through the nation ? Would all parties have been eager to throw from themselves the odium of such a tragedy, and a burst of spontaneous, irrepressible indignation come at once from the whole community ? No ; such a deed of wholesale murder would have been chronicled as an era of national glory ! Bonfires would have blazed all over the land ; our illuminated cities would have turned night into day ; the conquerors would have been crowned with laurels, and charioted in triumph through the country, amidst thunders of applause ; and the merry fife, and pealing drum, and thrilling bugle-horn, and the roar of a thousand cannon, and songs of praise to the God of battles, from ten thousand temples of the Prince of peace, would have given tongue to a nation's ecstasy.

But where is the difference ? "If public war," says Dr. Johnson, "be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so. Indeed, we may observe what strained arguments are used to reconcile war with the Christian religion ; but, in my opinion, it is exceedingly clear, that duelling, having *better reasons* for its barbarous violence, is *more* justifiable than wars in which thousands, without any cause of personal quarrel, go forth and massacre each other."

I ask, then, for the difference between these practices. Is it that

"One murder makes a villain;
Millions, a hero?"

Is not the same deed perpetrated? Do they not equally violate the letter of those divine precepts which forbid the taking of life, and require us not to avenge ourselves, not to return evil for evil, but to love our enemies, and overcome evil only with good?

Perhaps you regard war as an appeal to God for the justice of your cause. And has not duelling been from the first so regarded by its advocates? It was called a "*trial* by battle," a "*judicial* combat," and ministers of religion were required to be present with the utmost solemnity, and to pray, that God, as judge in the case, "would speed the right." You regard such an appeal to God as unauthorized and blasphemous; but wherein does it differ from the appeal in war? Has God, without a *special* commission from himself, authorized such an appeal in one case any more than he has in the other?

Nor can you, with any better success, plead the necessity of war, and tell us there is no other mode of protecting a nation's rights, or redressing its wrongs. This is the pith of the duellist's argument; and, when you remind him that the laws of the land will suffice for all his purposes, he will reply, that those laws do not reach his case, but abandon him at the very point where his character, his all as a man of honor, is put in jeopardy, and that he *must* fight, or lose what he holds dearer than life.

Just analyze the moral elements of duelling and war. Do they not aim at the same object? Do they not employ the same means? Do they not rest on the same principles, and spring from the same motives? Do they not call into exercise the same guilty passions? Are they not in all cases prompted more or less by pride or ambition, by anger, jealousy or revenge?

In vain will you plead the authority of law in favor of war. Was not duelling introduced under the high sanction of law? Was it not for ages a *legalized* mode of settling personal disputes? And if every government in Christendom should henceforth authorize duelling, would such a permission justify a practice so directly forbidden by the great Lawgiver of the universe? Should government *require* me to fight a duel, would it be my duty to obey *such* a requisition?

Unravel the details of these two customs. Is war regulated by law? Not so much as duelling is. But does the duellist set aside all laws except his own? So does war. Does the duellist adjudicate his own case? So does a nation in war.

Does the duellist, without witness, judge or jury, take vengeance into his own hands? So does war. Does the duellist make might, or skill, or chance, the arbiter of right? So does war. Does the duellist often fight merely to satisfy the laws of honor, and render it consistent for him to explain? Nations do the same in war.

Show us, then, the difference between these twin-customs. Will you find any in their origin, any in their motives, any in their pretexts, any in the passions they excite, any in the deeds they perpetrate, any in the fearful catastrophe at which they aim, any in a single one of their essential moral elements?

Yet how differently do men treat these customs! Should the government arm all our citizens with dirks, and pistols, and sword-canes, and bowie-knives, ready for mortal combat at a moment's warning, would such a preparation for bloodshed prevent murder? Yet this is the fundamental maxim of every nation in Christendom; and we are told, as confidently as if it were a self-evident truth, that "the best way to preserve peace, is to be well prepared for war;" a maxim which has occasioned fifty wars, where it has prevented one.

Were ministers of the gospel to attend duels, and sanction them by their prayers, would they not thus render the custom more popular, more extensive, and more inveterate? Would not the land come ere-long to swarm with duellists reputedly pious? Would not the custom soon claim the sanction of Heaven? Yet for fifteen centuries have ambassadors of the Prince of peace lent their countenance to the far worse practice of national duelling.

Should Congress appoint orators all over the land to eulogize the fallen Cilley; should his murderer be crowned with laurels, and be carried in triumph from city to city, amidst the huzzas of the multitude, and the brightest smiles of woman; should some zealous partisan write his history even before his death, and extol him to the skies as a man worthy of all praise for his bravery and skill; should the highest honors of a grateful, admiring nation be lavished upon him as a reward for the bloody deed; should songs be composed, and monuments erected, and annual celebrations held by the rich, the gay, and the great, to commemorate the glorious victory of the duellist; would all this tend to check the practice of duelling? Yet all this is done throughout Christendom in support of war, with scarce a word of rebuke or dissent from Christians, or Christian ministers!

Not a few of them even tell us, that war is inevitable, so long as human nature remains the same; that it is vain to make any specific efforts for the abolition of this custom; that we must wait for the gospel to overspread the globe, and exorcise the war-passions of mankind, before peace can come. Do they reason thus in regard to duelling? Whence this custom? From the false notions, the wrong choice of men. Change these, and you annihilate the custom. And shall nothing be done for this purpose? Would you have duelling continue without rebuke, in the midst of Christians themselves, until the Millennium comes? Would you have no law against it, no denunciations from the pulpit or the press, no warnings to the young from parents and teachers, no concentration of public sentiment, no rallying of the wise and the good, no special efforts whatever to crush this blood-leech? It has been banished from New England; and why may it not be driven from the South and the West? But, if duelling can be abolished before the Millennium, and even without any change in the nature of mankind, why may not the practice of international duels be made to cease wherever Christianity prevails?

PACIFICUS.

PLAIN PRINCIPLES CARRIED OUT.

"THE law of the duellist," says Mr. Frelinghuysen, the excellent mayor of Newark, "is an outrage upon every principle of order and humanity. It sets the laws of God, and the institutions of a Christian people at defiance; and, if this murderous spirit be not met, and firmly and fearlessly rebuked by the frowns of public sentiment, on ourselves will abide much of the guilt of murder. It can be checked, and effectually repressed, whenever the people, true to their high duties, shall rise in the majesty of public opinion, and frown upon these atrocious deeds of violence; and the blood of the murdered, the tears of the bereaved, and the commands of a righteous God, call upon them now to speak, and bear their stern and indignant testimony against this heaven-daring sin."

How obvious and forcible the application of all this to the custom of war! Is it not "a heaven-daring sin," a vast cluster, a long and thickening series of such sins? Does it not "set the laws of God at defiance?" Its whole spirit, every one of its peculiar deeds, is expressly, repeatedly forbidden in the Bible. Is it not "an outrage upon every principle of order and humanity"? Far more so than duelling. "Whenever the people shall rise in the majesty of public opinion, and frown upon its atrocious deeds of violence," will it not